

FREEDOM WATCH

The Citizens Project Newsletter

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WHO WE ARE

In the Pikes Peak area, we are seeing a push toward prayer in the schools, pressure to modify school curriculum to reflect religious views, the rise of stealth candidates in elections, increased anti-gay activity, and growing religious intolerance. Citizens Project was formed to challenge those trends.

We represent citizens from a broad spectrum of political parties and religious beliefs who are concerned about these threats to our constitutional freedoms by local sectarian and political extremists.

We are dedicated to maintaining the traditional American values of separation of church and state, freedom of religion and speech, pluralism, individuality, and tolerance and compassion for others.

We invite you to participate in this process with us. ♦

CITIZENS PROJECT

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CHALLENGER SCHOOL CONTROVERSY

On February 17, a graphic seven-minute anti-abortion video clip from Pat Robertson's 700 Club television program was shown by closed-circuit TV to over three hundred seventh-grade science students at Challenger Middle School as part of their human sexuality unit. The video was not part of the scheduled sexuality curriculum and did not appear in the lesson plan.

In the video clip, Christian Coalition's Pat Robertson explained that an abortion was going to be shown and that parents should use discretion in letting children view what followed. The clip, from a 1980 production called "Conceived in Liberty," showed footage of an ultrasound monitor recording a suction abortion. The film's narrator describes the somewhat murky images as a baby writhing to evade the vacuum appliance, adding that he had seen doctors turn away from the ultrasound monitor to avoid seeing what was happening.

The Concerns

Upon hearing about and reviewing the abortion video, a number of parents questioned school administrators about the appropriateness of allowing such a graphic film to be seen by seventh graders, particularly without parental consent. They were told that the video was not school property and not part of the approved curriculum. The film clip belonged to one of the teachers, who had shown it over the past four years in human sexuality classes without the administration's knowledge. Moreover, contrary to school policy, the film was not made available at the parents' preview night held before the start of the human sexuality unit.

A review of the teacher-prepared human sexuality workbook, entitled GRACE, used in the same seventh-grade class showed that the Pat Robertson video was not the only problem in this sex ed curriculum. Important information on human sexuality was presented to the seventh-grade class without objectivity and balance. Anti-abortion editorial cartoons and a virulent anti-abortion editorial by Don Feder were included in the workbook without balancing opinions. Information on homosexuality was placed in the "Sexual Victims" section of the workbook. Some workbooks contained nine reprinted letters and comments opposing gay rights and lifestyle, compared to three supportive letters and comments.

Actions By The School

Since the concerned parents brought the matter to the attention of the school administration, school officials have taken a number of steps. The principal at Challenger sent a letter to the parents of all seventh-grade students explaining that the film should never have been shown to students at that grade level and that it would not be shown again. The seventh-grade principal delivered the same message to all the students who saw the film and encouraged them to see the school counselor if they were disturbed by what they had seen and heard. A curriculum review committee has been established. The District 20 school board adopted a policy that the school board must approve all teaching materials used in the core part of curriculums, and requiring that school principals coordinate use and selection of curriculum materials.

In addition, a personnel action was taken against the teacher who brought the Robertson film clip and showed it to students. In accordance with District policy, the specifics of that personnel action have not been made public by District 20, although a news story reported that the teacher received a letter of disciplinary reprimand. In

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response, the teacher has filed a grievance against the school district.

Recent Activity

On May 21, the *Gazette-Telegraph* ran a front-page story on the Challenger issue. The G-T story spoke about the Pat Robertson video clip, the lack of balance in the human sexuality class, the religious references in the sexuality workbook, and allegations that the teacher had been telling Bible stories to her students. The *Briargate Edition* newspaper also carried an article. Some of the local television stations, notably Channel 11, picked up the story in their evening news.

The allegations that the teacher was reading from the Bible to her class are not new. In 1992, a parent reported to the Challenger Middle School administration that the teacher had read the Bible to her students, and then had requested that students not tell their parents that she had done so. The administration then met with the teacher to discuss this incident.

Parents supporting the teacher and her human sexuality curriculum are circulating petitions encouraging the school district to cancel the disciplinary action against the teacher and support her existing human sexuality curriculum. The *Gazette-Telegraph* story indicated that these petitions had 150 signatures as of the date of the story. On May 24, several people picketed Challenger Middle School in support of the teacher.

Since the story appeared in the *Gazette-Telegraph*, at least one student at Challenger has been singled out by her teacher in front of her classmates for her connection with the parents who had initially expressed their concerns to the school administration.

The Positions

In the absence of any statement by Challenger Middle School or District 20, a wealth of rumor and misinformation has circulated in our community. A review of the concerns of the parents may be helpful to clarify the situation.

The parents who approached the Challenger administration with concerns about the human sexuality curriculum have expressed the following:

1. The Robertson film clip and the workbook violate three written District 20 policies: a) age appropriateness—lengthy and graphic treatment of abortion and homosexuality is inappropriate for 12- and 13-year-olds, b) balanced perspective—information on those controversial topics was not presented in a balanced manner, and c) respect for all people—the curriculum failed to acknowledge and promote respect for all people in our pluralistic society.

2. Circumventing the parental review of materials used in the sexual education curriculum is a violation of school policy and a breach of trust with students, parents, and the District. Everyone involved with schools becomes less trusting and more

suspicious of any sort of controversial material and of a teacher's motives in presenting it.

3. Controversial political or religious issues should be presented in a balanced fashion, and a teacher's political or religious agenda should not be imposed in the public school curriculum.

The parents who are acting to support the teacher and her curriculum have expressed the following feelings:

1. A majority of the parents of the seventh-grade students have not called to complain about the teacher's violation of the District 20 policies regarding balance and age appropriateness, and therefore the school district "gave in" to a vocal minority of liberal parents. If the majority of parents in the district support a teacher's bias, then the school district should support that teacher and not require the curriculum to be balanced.

2. The teacher's human sexuality curriculum, whether balanced or not, has generated few complaints in the past. For that reason, the school district should not change the curriculum.

3. Although the teacher did not provide the Pat Robertson abortion video at the parental review night as required by school policy, nonetheless that teacher would have allowed any parent to view it later, if the parent had known about the video and had asked. That should be enough.

4. Because parents have the freedom to withdraw their children from any part of the sexuality curriculum, parents should not complain if portions of the curriculum are unbalanced, biased, or contain age inappropriate materials.

These same parents have also expressed concern about whether this whole matter was an initiative directed by Citizens Project. In fact, the parents that contacted the school with concerns about lack of balance in the human sexuality curriculum did call upon Citizens Project as a resource as they attempted to understand the existing policies and programs at Challenger Middle School.

Looking To The Future

Challenger Middle School and School District 20 will be dealing with this issue for at least the next couple of months. To prevent this type of problem from happening in the future, the school district should strengthen its policies promoting balance and use of age appropriate materials in curriculums, particularly with regard to controversial issues. The district should also strengthen its policies on curriculum adoption and religion in schools. The school district should consider better methods to communicate those policies to the teachers, perhaps including teacher in-service trainings. These will help insure a continued quality education for all students.

What can we expect in the future around this issue? Parents who support the teacher in question are likely to continue their pressure on the school district. They will attempt to turn the Challenger issue into a referendum on abstinence-based sex education and anti-abortion and anti-homosexual political positions. The issue of abstinence-based sex education will be a

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new one to this controversy, as almost all parents agree that abstinence-based (but not abstinence-only) sex education is a good policy and highly appropriate for the curriculum. The appropriateness of a teacher presenting only one side of the controversial abortion or gay and lesbian issues, however, goes directly to the question of balance and the quality education of our children.

The driving issues in this controversy remain the age-

inappropriateness of the Robertson video, the lack of parental review of the video as required by school policies, and the fact that school policies were violated by the lack of balance in the seventh-grade human sexuality unit. Those are the issues that the concerned parents brought to the Challenger Middle School after the Robertson video was shown, and those remain the salient issues in this controversy.

We will keep you informed. ♦

CITIZENS PROJECT OPINION: IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION

The human sexuality instructor at Challenger Middle School who brought in and used the graphic Pat Robertson abortion video without parental review and who also failed to provide appropriate balance in the presentation of issues in her human sexuality workbook was properly disciplined by the school district. The parents who brought these matters to the school administration in February should be congratulated for bringing those matters to the school administration, working with the administration to resolve the problem, and proceeding through established channels with their concerns.

Parents and others now putting pressure on District 20 to support the teacher and the Robertson video are promoting an agenda that is not in the best interests of the students. Balance on controversial issues is necessary for a quality education. If these parents are successful in generating enough publicity and pressure, they believe they can vindicate the actions of the teacher and sustain the bias in her human sexuality curriculum. If they are successful, then teachers and administrators in all our school districts will understand that these groups can produce the necessary political pressure to warp school curriculums to their desires.

What Can You Do?

If you live in District 20, you should call the school district (at 598-2566) to register your feelings on this issue. The school district needs to hear that people of all political persuasions are concerned about balance, age-appropriateness, the right to parental review of material, and religion in the school. Then, you should not hesitate to follow up your phone call with a letter to the school district (School District 20, 7610 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO 80920) and to the Gazette-Telegraph (G-T, Box 1779, Colorado Springs, CO 80901). Finally, take the time to discuss this issue with your friends and neighbors, and keep informed of the latest developments by reading the newspaper and watching the news.

If you live in another school district, you should be concerned with the curriculum policies of your local school. You may want to call the school or your school district to ask about your school's policies on balance in, and age-appropriateness of, curricular materials. Even though school is finished for this academic year, you may want to actually preview the curriculum materials for next year in your school to see if Pat Robertson has slipped into your school's curriculum. You also may want to write a letter to the Gazette-Telegraph newspaper to express your opinions about this matter.

If your child was involved in the Challenger Middle School seventh-grade human sexuality classes during the last four years, and if you have concerns about the appropriateness of the materials presented in that course, you may want to contact attorney Mike Duncan at 633-9977. Mike is working with some of the parents who have concerns about inappropriate materials in the Challenger Middle School curriculum.

If you know or hear of similar incidents in your school district, please call Citizens Project with the details so that we can keep the community informed and work together to promote better school policies. ♦

NEWS BRIEFS

Church And State In Poland Poland has now instituted a law requiring religious teaching and prayers in public schools. Religion is now a compulsory subject with grades on each student's report card, prayers can be said at the beginning and at the end of each public school class, and a cross can now be hung in each classroom. According to news reports, the Catholic Primate of Poland was ebullient, saying "We think that the believers have the right to be present in public life." The Government ombudsman on human rights, Tadeusz Zielinski, was less enthusiastic: "I am afraid we are now standing at the gates of a religious state." The new laws also require that the

Polish media conform to "Christian Values." No public response has yet been received from Jews and other minority religions in Poland.

Moving To Poland? A city council member in Alvin, Texas, advocates that only Christians should be allowed to hold public office in the United States. Councilman Larry Townsend said all elected officials should be required to make a "public profession of faith in God the Father and the Son." As Townsend later said: "This is supposed to be a Christian country."

(For More News Briefs, See Page 5)

The Fate of Faith in Colorado Springs

By Ken Burrows

Early last year, in response to a longing for deeper spiritual growth, I, like thousands before me, was drawn to the Pikes Peak region as a place to experience that preternatural bonding. With a 17-year religious education and more than four decades of personal commitment to my chosen faith, I arrived with high expectations of enriching it.

Now, a year later, I regret to say the opposite has happened. I have struggled to retain faith here, in an atmosphere marked so frequently by hostility, self-righteousness, and egoism. I have time and time again watched faith here debased by the people who claim most loudly to cherish it, as they regularly abduct it from its spiritual moorings and play it out as political and social theater or as a product for profit. More disappointing still, I have seen people point to their Biblical base as a rationale for actions that violate Scriptural mandates on brotherhood. This represents a troubling contradiction, to say the least.

The Dark Side of Faith

The twisting of the term "Christian" here is complete to the point of meaninglessness. Can people not see that an ultimate good such as one's personal relationship with his or her God can be given a dark side? That moral arrogance can threaten faith when actions, however well meant, result in harm to the human family?

The call to love—particularly to love those with whom we disagree—is the overriding tenet of faith defined in the Biblical source embraced so overtly by self-described believers. But where is this love in the Pikes Peak region? This is, on too many occasions, an environment without acceptance for fellow human beings, much less love. Without respect. Without charity. Here faith is often used to open wounds rather than heal them. Here business leaders say without remorse that there is a "right" to be discriminatory. Street preachers prey on innocent children. Stealth candidates launch "Christian" involvement in public life by way of dishonesty. And the mainstream media aid and abet it all. This perverts, rather than preserves, moral creed.

True Meaning Lost

This puts faith in substantial peril because it trivializes it into a political tool. Here people too often use Scripture as nothing more than a trove to ransack for precedents to justify ostracism or some other social malevolence. They manage to find a blessing for exclusion and ill will from the very document that has acceptance and compassion as its core.

It is no surprise that religion here is worn so prominently on sleeves and billboards. For it is worn proportionately less in the heart.

Amoral "Superiority"

There also seems to be no awareness here that crusades of moral or social superiority have an amoral basis, that the spiritual essence of faith wanes as religious elan approaches theocracy. There is no sense of history that can recall proof of this truth, whether it be the slave trade, the Holocaust, the Ayatollah, or even Jonestown or the Branch Davidians.

No region I've lived in has spoken so loudly in defense of

Old Testament wrath and abandoned so pervasively the positive spirit of New Testament love—the generosity known as agape. Here individuals will sacrifice the harmony and health of community to win narrow agendas of advocacy. They even reject conciliation—a persistent New Testament theme—in favor of a struggle for political and social separatism.

Faced with such a specter of abused faith, what does one seeking a stronger faith do?

Prayer or Posturing?

You begin by striving for as full an awareness as possible. An understanding that faith can mean different things to different people. That some will choose to manipulate it rather than practice it.

It's the difference between prayer and posturing. Between religion and the distorted religiosity that is more loudly practiced here.

You remember also a faith that is not content until it is forced upon others is an immature faith. You remind yourself of Richard Harris' words—from the reading "Too Many Saviours On My Cross"—that despite how persistently others may try, they cannot convert Christ into a bullet and shoot him into men's hearts.

"Bad" Religion

You remember not everyone is up to the task of meeting the radical demands for love, acceptance and sacrifice delineated in the New Testament. Nor the radical principles of individual freedom on which this nation was founded. As faith mixes unwholesomely with politics, you recall the unassailable words of Benjamin Franklin from more than two centuries ago..."When a religion is good...it will support itself, and when it does not...and God does not take care to support it so that its professors are obliged to call for help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend of it's being a bad one." There is, by this definition, a lot of bad religion in Colorado Springs.

And perhaps more than anything else, here in the sublime Rockies environment, you remember that the works of the Creator hold truths that are immutable. And the interpreters of those works do not.

Faith is at risk in this region. Abundant faith in a community should be a cause for reconciliation, not rancor. Something is wrong with the "faith" in the Pikes Peak region. True faith here will not endure repeated abuse. It will wither if not well tended. Can faith survive?

The time to discover the answer is now.

Ken Burrows is a Nebraska native and former student of theology who has been writing professionally for 21 years. He works for a national publishing firm and his essays have appeared in a wide variety of national publications.

The author hopes to compile a wide range of commentary on this subject for a possible published anthology. He invites people of all backgrounds and persuasions to submit their thoughts to him on this issue. Mail essays of any length to Ken Burrows, P.O. Box 6328, Woodland Park, Colorado, 80866-6328. ♦

NEWS BRIEFS

Proposed Constitutional Amendment On Obscenity. As reported in our February newsletter, Colorado is facing a new proposed constitutional amendment on obscenity. This amendment was presented at the last legislative session, but the necessary resolution authorizing a later citizens vote was defeated. Respected lobbyist Bill Artist, a former state legislator, attempted to persuade his former colleagues of the need for this new amendment.

In contrast to the arguments for Amendment 2, this new amendment does not want obscenity to be a matter of statewide concern subject to one uniform standard. Instead, the proponents of this new amendment argue strongly for local rule, to allow any town or county to regulate obscenity and pornography as it sees fit, subject only to the limitations imposed by the First Amendment.

The hope is that individual cities and counties will enact much broader restrictions on written materials, films, and artistic displays than that now permitted by the Colorado Constitution.

The groups backing this constitutional amendment display distinct overlap. A December Rocky Mountain Family Council (RMFC) report stated that this constitutional amendment was drafted by RMFC, headed by Barry Arrington. Later, RMFC reported that the amendment was drafted by the Coalition for Children and Families (CCF). A recent Christian Coalition statement notes that Barry Arrington is the director of CCF, which was formerly the Colorado Coalition Against Pornography. A *Denver Post* news story shows the amendment being promoted by the Coalition Helping to Ensure Laws For Dignity, organized by Barry Arrington.

This Colorado constitutional amendment is similar to portions of a 1991 Michigan bill, backed by the American Family Association.

All indications are that this constitutional amendment will be the next "hot button" political issue on the agenda of the Colorado religious right/family values folks.

National Conference to Start Local Chapter. The National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) is planning a Colorado Springs chapter. The NCCJ works with clergy, schools and businesses to examine theological, social and ethical issues to help the religious communities work together to address divisive issues. Colorado Springs, having had its share of divisive issues recently, welcomes the healing efforts of this group.

Biblically Correct in America? The latest look at racism comes from Pastor Pete Peters, a fundamentalist Ft. Collins minister. His new booklet, *A Scriptural Understanding of The Race Issue*, unhesitatingly quotes from the Bible to re-establish the Biblical case for discrimination and racial superiority. The cover of his pamphlet contains an illustration of four identifiable minorities (a black, an Indian, an Asian, and a Jew) peering down at a worried Caucasian man reading from his Bible. The nearby quote: "The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you shall go down lower and lower." (Deut. 28:43) "The Caucasian people who settled America and

formed the USA," says Peters, "are the covenant people of the Bible." Pastor Peters quotes freely from the Bible to substantiate God's curse of minorities who are now oppressing God's chosen people.

Pastor Peters does not shrink from taking the Bible at its word, whatever the outcome. His pamphlet, *Death Penalty For Homosexuals Is Prescribed In the Bible*, documents the biblical quotes that require discrimination and mandate a new American death penalty for the crime of homosexuality. "The Bible," says Peters, "must be applied and obeyed in America."

If The Bible Doesn't Say No, Then It's OK. The news story: Cornerstone Baptist Church here in Colorado Springs enticed children to a church carnival May 1, and then, without obtaining the permission of their parents, required them to be baptized by immersion and to declare their faith before they could participate in the church carnival. The response of Cornerstone's associate pastor Dan Irwin: "No one can show me one passage in the Bible where it says parental permission is required before a child is baptized." The result: a possible lawsuit against Cornerstone Baptist by aggrieved parents. Baptism of children without parental consent has been a common practice in the past at Cornerstone, where pastor Dean Miller says he is merely pursuing the Bible's "great commission" to baptize as many people as possible.

Politically Correct Schools, Part One. The expanded agenda of Colorado For Family Values (CFV) now includes attacking schools, their curriculums, and their libraries. CFV's theory is that discussing homosexuality in schools is tantamount to promoting it. And books that mention gays and lesbians, says CFV, are part of a broader effort by homosexuals to encourage students to be gay. According to CFV's Will Perkins, we should be "correcting homosexuality, not adapting to it."

In April, CFV attacked the Denver Public Schools, saying those schools promoted a "homosexual orientation." Now, CFV members have begun a campaign in Colorado Springs to pressure local schools to ban books from the school libraries.

Politically Correct Schools, Part Two. The Bremerton (Washington) High School student council approved an amendment to the high school constitution that would bar gay students from serving in the school government "in order to preserve the high moral standards that B.H.S. is built upon." According to the school administration, the amendment was proposed by a group of religious, conservative students. Among them was Mike Mercer, president of the Young Republicans Club, who said, "This sends a message to the school that homosexuality is wrong." The high school student body subsequently voted down the amendment.

CFV Explains About "Big Lie" Propaganda. The current Colorado For Family Values (CFV) literature includes a flier explaining how Hitler's "Big Lie" technique is used in the Amendment 2 controversy: "Lie often enough and boldly

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Citizens Project is proud to join KRCC and
Calvary United Methodist Church in presenting the

2nd Annual
Festival
of
Diversity

Memorial Park

Sunday July 18, 1993, 10 AM-6 PM

All are welcome to enjoy the music, food and arts and crafts of many cultures in
an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect.

Volunteers! Call Mike Shaver at the CP office, 520-9899, to help with:

❶ information ☐ general ⊕ first aid/security
📦 cleanup 🖐 stage handling

Vendors! Booth fee is \$10, or \$25 with electricity--call Mike Shaver at the CP office,
520-9899, for information on selling 🍷 food and 🛠 crafts.

Activities! If you have a display, game, or 😊 entertainment that fits into the
theme of diversity that you would like to present, call Dave Stover, 528-1241.

Diversity **DRAGON!** This people-powered parade float will represent the diversity
of Colorado Springs. To participate, call Jodie Bennet at 475-8487.

Sponsors! 🏢 If you or your company would like to be a corporate sponsor,
please call the Calvary United Methodist Church, 599-7250.

AN INVITATION TO OUR NEXT CITIZENS PROJECT GENERAL MEETING

The next Citizens Project General Meeting will be held Sunday, July 11, at the Palmer High School Auditorium (corner of Nevada and Platte). The meeting begins at 7 p.m., but you are welcome to come between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. for snacks, to talk with Citizens Project staff and fellow participants, and to browse through our literature. We will discuss current projects and future directions of Citizens Project and convene neighborhood circles. Come join the people who are making Citizens Project happen.

In January, 850 people attended the general meeting, and there was standing room only at the Fine Arts Center. This time, our meeting will be in the spacious Palmer High School auditorium with space for one and all. No reservation or payment necessary.



TIRED OF CONFLICT? CITIZENS PROJECT ANNOUNCES A CONFLICT RESOLUTION SEMINAR

Citizens Project and the Colorado Institute For Conflict Resolution are pleased to sponsor a one-day seminar on conflict resolution. This seminar will start at 9 a.m. Saturday June 26 in Friendship Hall at Calvary United Methodist Church, 4210 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Colorado Springs. For more information, see the "Inside Citizens Project" section in this newsletter, or call Citizens Project.

Please sign me up for the June 26 seminar. Payment is enclosed.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): Daytime: _____ Evening: _____

Please make checks payable to Citizens Project.

If signing up before June 20, please include \$30 per person or \$55 per couple.

If signing up after June 20, please include \$45 per person or \$60 per couple.

Childcare will be available for an additional fee, but must be reserved in advance. We also will be offering a limited number of scholarships. Call Dorothy Becker at Citizens Project, 520-9899.

Please return this form with your payment to Citizens Project, Box 2085, Colorado Springs, Co 80901. For additional information, call Citizens Project at 520-9899.

WHEN RELIGION GETS SICK

The article below is the condensed version of a sermon delivered by Dr. Harvey Martz at Calvary United Methodist Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado on April 25, 1993. Reprinted by permission of Dr. Martz.

We've all seen the pictures on TV. The poorly constructed buildings in Waco were burning fiercely and exploding, and part of the horror was that of the eighty or so people that were burned inside; twenty-four of them were children. Someone asked whether this group didn't have the freedom to practice their religion in this country. The answer was yes, of course they did, except they were stockpiling \$200,000 worth of possibly illegal guns and ammunition.

The events in Waco give us new reason to question the old formula that says, "I think one religion is just as good as another religion." David Koresh quoted the Bible and talked about God a lot, but was his cult a pathway to God or to something else?

Waco not only raises the question of the danger of cults, but also the question of when religion gets sick, because religion can get sick. The extreme example of David Koresh reminds us that just because someone uses the Bible and mentions God doesn't mean that what he or she is doing or saying is right or good or healthy. And we can think back to Jesus' temptations in the wilderness when even the devil was able to quote scripture.

This concept of sick religion is not new. Jesus had His harshest words to say about the abuses of religions in His time: about the sickness that He saw in the religious self-righteousness and exclusiveness.

We need especially to raise this question in our own city of Colorado Springs, where we have had lay persons and clergy leaders in the past few months speaking out in favor of discrimination.

Howard Clinebell, who teaches pastoral counseling at a California United Methodist seminary, has prepared some guidelines and questions that help us determine when somebody's religious expression is sick or not. These guidelines are contained in his book *The Mental Health Ministry of the Local Church*. Clinebell's thesis is that religion can be healing and life-affirming or it can be repressive and life-crippling, depending on how it is understood and used.

I want to use part of his list, but also to add some other criteria from my own list to help us think about how to recognize when religion gets sick, and to think about not only the religion of David Koresh, but about other religious practices and beliefs in our time. It may not just be the cults that are unhealthy and destructive for the human spirit—it may also be some common and very popular groups. Here are some guidelines I think are important:

■ First, I look at the favorite scripture for a group or a church. Every group, every leader in a church, has some favorite scriptures. Some churches emphasize the Old Testament more than the New Testament. Some churches emphasize the letters of Paul more than they do the Gospels. The Gospels are where we get to know Jesus best. I think that one of the things that causes religions to get sick is when they lose touch with the teaching and humanity of Jesus.

Revelations was David Koresh's favorite part of the Bible. That makes me suspicious, because that book is full of code language and fantastic imagery to communicate the simple message that God is going to prevail. That book is the most misused and misunderstood book in the Bible.

■ Second, I look at how a religion or a church group treats the little people, the forgotten people, the least, the last and the lost. Does it encourage compassion and justice for those who are needy and poor, or is it simply a "feel good religion" that only ministers to those who are already comfortable?

■ A third question about healthy or unhealthy religion is what a church or a religion does to foster healthy self-esteem in people. Does it assume what Jesus assumes in our scripture that it is good and acceptable to love one's self so we can also love our neighbor?

Does it continually preach to people about how bad they are, about what wretches they are, what worthless worms they are? What did Jesus do and say? He treated people with care and love and acceptance, and He assumed that even those who are rejected by the religion of His time were lovable and acceptable creations of God. Does a religion talk more about sin or about grace?

On the flip side, does a group or a church take evil seriously? I sometimes think what's come to be known as new-age religion doesn't take evil seriously enough.

■ Fourth, are the followers of a particular church or a leader joyful in their lifestyle, or are they grim? Mary Chapin Carpenter talks about "a preacher who speaks of the light but there was really brimstone in his throat." We remember that Jesus was accused of being too joyful, too willing to embrace and affirm life.

■ Next, I look at the primary picture of God held by a group or a church or a sect. Is God seen as an angry, condemning judge who's waiting to catch us doing something bad so we can be punished? Is God the source of all tragedies and accidents as God is for fundamentalist Muslims and fundamentalist Christians, or is God's will for good, while at the same time there can be randomness in our accidents. The latter is Jesus' view of the world.

■ Sixth: What's the relationship of this religion to nationalism? Does it encourage a blind obedience to civil authorities? Does it wrap the flag around the cross? Does it encourage a superficial nationalism that always sees God on the side of our country?

■ I am also concerned about whether a church or a group or a sect has several levels of membership. Does it allow women to be full participants and leaders, or is it sexist and patriarchal like the religions Jesus opposed? Does it take seriously Paul's words that in Christ the barriers of discrimination and second class citizenship are broken now?

■ The next question is how does a group or a church treat people who disagree with them? Is there room for diversity and the ability to think for oneself? Another piece of this question is whether a church or a group sees itself as the only true church and any others who don't think the same way are just heathen people, obviously going to hell.

(Martz sermon continued from Page 8)

■ Ninth, who does the group see as its enemy? The godless Communists used to be the enemy for some churches which allowed them to rally their forces. Is there a mentality that says we wear the white hats and the other people wear the black hats, an "us and them" mentality where there is no room for complexity and ambiguity?

■ Next, how authoritarian is the leadership of a particular group? David Koresh was very authoritarian. Many churches and groups like his attract people who want or need somebody else to do their thinking for them. Authoritarian churches are just as damaging as authoritarian governments because they trample on the human will and the human spirit.

■ Eleventh, what is the attitude toward scientific truth and reason in a group or a church? Is it hostile toward any truth besides biblical truth, or does it see God as the source of all truth and is willing to learn new truths from science and through reason that may not be contained in the Bible.

■ Twelfth: Does the teaching of the group, if it's Christian, concentrate on what Jesus calls "the weightier matters of the law"—justice, mercy, faith, and compassion—or does it major in minors and concentrate on what's trivial? Does a church or group have to "prop themselves up by putting other people down?"

■ Finally, and most importantly, if we are talking about Christian groups, how much of Jesus do we see in their life and their practices? Do we see a Jesus who got into trouble because He questioned the conventional and traditional values of His time? Do we see the Jesus who welcomed and associated with the outcasts, the misfits, the social deviants of His time and therefore was accused of being soft on sin? Do we see the Jesus who condemns self-righteousness and racism and prejudice and discrimination and kept drawing the circle of who belonged in the family of God bigger and bigger? How much of Jesus do we see?

We may have some sick religions in our time. We need to think about how these guidelines apply to churches and groups in society today. ♦

Mark Your Calendar!

- June 20 Gay Pride Parade
- June 26 One-day Conflict Resolution Seminar
- July 7 Citizens Project Introductory Meeting
- July 9-11 Conflict Resolution Seminar
- July 11 Citizens Project General Meeting
- July 18 Festival of Diversity

Further information on these events is in this newsletter.

(News Briefs continued from Page 5)

enough, and people will find it difficult not to believe you." The flier goes on to explain that the "Big Lie" technique has worked because "History never asks the victor whether he's told the truth."

No Self-Esteem In Tennessee. Coffee County, Tennessee, is down on self-esteem. Before programs such as the Pumsy series to increase children's self-esteem can be reintroduced into the county's public schools, the strongly-opposed school board must grant specific approval. To make sure that student self-esteem does not slip in through the back door, the school board has also prohibited guidance counselors from entering classrooms.

American Family Association Denounces Businesses. The American Family Association (AFA) recently denounced the Eastman Kodak corporation for giving "special recognition" to homosexuals by permitting a newsletter for gays and lesbians on the company electronic mail system. Kodak's response was that they were committed to creating a work environment where all employees are valued and supported. AFA's magazine provided the address and phone number of Kodak, in the event that its members would care to complain, and also provided a listing of items sold by Kodak, should AFA members wish to boycott those products.

Morality In The Media? The latest organization in the Colorado "family values" constellation is Prime Time Today, a new watchdog group for Colorado television. "Prime Time" stands for Parents Responsibly Involved In Media Excellence and Teens Involved In Media Excellence. "We want," say the founders, "to support and encourage those sponsors and producers who promote traditional family values." In case you are not clear about the problem, the Prime Time Today materials include a list of "questionable" television programs, along with a copy of "The Fight Back Book" from the Mississippi-based American Family Association. Prime Time supports calls and letters to sponsors and a boycott, if necessary.

Sex Everywhere You Look. Jane Schindler, head of the Colorado branch of Eagle Forum, is worried about the Camel cigarette ads that use the drawings of the camel-figure, Joe Cool. Some have said that the camel is artfully drawn to resemble a penis and scrotum. "He's America's favorite spokedgenital," says Schindler, who is concerned about sex in advertising.

And, with the correct perspective, even children's stories contain worrisome sex. Samantha Smith, writing in *Eagle Forum* newsletter, reviewed the Dr. Seuss children's book *Green Eggs and Ham*. "Reading with a now-critical eye," she says, "illustrations become interesting in the middle of the book, where the train tunnel doesn't quite look like a train tunnel and the end of the tunnel seems to have hair on it. Could that be?" (Ed. note: Because of Ms. Smith's concern, Citizens Project has restricted its only copy of *Green Eggs and Ham* to persons over age 18 who have written permission from both parents.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Festival of Diversity Scheduled. The 1993 Festival of Diversity takes place Sunday, July 18 in Memorial Park. Citizens Project is cosponsoring the event with Calvary United Methodist Church and KRCC radio. A great deal of planning is going into this year's festival, and Citizens Project is an important part of bringing this exciting program together. We would like your participation, but we also would like your help. If you have an interest in being a food vendor, crafts vendor or know of an individual or business you think would add to the 1993 Festival of Diversity, contact Mike Shaver at the CP office. If, on the other hand, you would like to volunteer for the festival, let us know as soon as possible. For more information, see the announcement in this newsletter.

People for the American Way Report Available. In April, the Colorado office of People For the American Way, a Washington, D.C.-based research and information organization, released a report on Focus on the Family. As you may recall, this report received quite a bit of press in Colorado, and the *Gazette-Telegraph* has run numerous letters to the editor complaining about the report. A number of people called Citizens Project for copies of the PFAW report. We now have the PFAW report on Focus. In addition, we asked Focus for their response to the PFAW report, which they sent us. Both documents are available from Citizens Project. As an additional bonus, the Focus document includes a swipe at "the left-wing Citizens Project" for failing to adequately document the impact of the religious right's agenda in the Pikes Peak area.

Anti-Violence Project Phone Change. The Colorado Springs Anti-Violence Project has changed the phone number of its 24-hour crisis line to 338-8899. The primary goal of the Anti-Violence Project is to assist lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals with victim's assistance, resource referrals, crisis intervention, legal and systems advocacy, support services, and community education.

PrideFest '93. The 1993 Pikes Peak Pride Parade, sponsored by the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center, is Sunday, June 20th. This year's parade promises to be an important event, both for Colorado Springs, the birthplace of Amendment 2, and the state of Colorado. Citizens Project participants will be a part of this year's event, marching under the CP banner. We encourage Citizens Project supporters to join us in the march down Nevada Avenue to Acacia Park in downtown Colorado Springs. If you are interested in being a part of this march, meet your fellow Citizens Project participants at 10:30 a.m. at the corner of Cache La Poudre and Nevada. Look for our banner.

CFV Schedules Seminar In Springs. Colorado For Family Values (CFV), who brought you Amendment 2, has scheduled its latest Community Watch Seminar here in Colorado Springs. CFV has held a number of Community Watch Seminars around the state in the last few months, touting the horrors of the "homosexual agenda" which they say will come

soon to a school or business near you. The seminar is scheduled for June 26 at First Church of the Nazarene, 4120 E. Fountain, Colorado Springs and will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. You may want to confirm the date and location with CFV at some time shortly before the meeting; call them at 577-4916, or call the Church of the Nazarene at 596-5119.

These seminars are open to the public, and CFV is happy to preach its anti-gay message to all who will listen. It is not unusual for CFV to hold a short initial meeting, with a second meeting immediately thereafter; the second meeting is open only to people who say they voted "yes" on Amendment 2 and who will complete a questionnaire with personal information, including the church to which they belong. We are happy to see that CFV has chosen Colorado Springs as one of the Colorado towns that merit its special "community watch".

Citizens Initiative on Primaries. A Denver group, Citizens Voice, has started an initiative to change the way political candidates are selected in Colorado. Currently, candidates are selected through a caucus system within each party. The proposed constitutional amendment would permit citizens to pick party candidates via primary elections, thereby opening up the system. This initiative was prompted by a concern that the religious right and other right wing organizations were planning a takeover of the Republican party in Jefferson County.

Republicans are divided about the proposed primary initiative, as not all Republicans are convinced that there is actually a religious right problem. Democrats are somewhat indifferent to the proposed initiative, because they do not see the same problem in the Democratic Party.

To get an initiative onto the ballot requires signatures, and Citizens Voice has the forms to get signatures. If you are interested in helping them, or if you have questions, call Steve Burton at Citizens Voice—(303) 937-0834.

Citizens Project Introduction Meeting. The Citizens Project introductory meeting for July will be held 7 p.m. Thursday, July 7 at Calvary United Methodist Church, 4210 Austin Bluffs Parkway (near Cub Foods). This introductory meeting is open to all, but is designed to introduce Citizens Project to new participants. Our June introductory meeting was held at Hillside Community Center.

Conflict Resolution Seminar. A conflict resolution seminar is scheduled for Saturday, June 26. For more information please see "Inside Citizens Project" in this newsletter.

Your Announcement here. To get your announcement in the next issue of *Freedom Watch*, simply mail the information to Citizens Project with a request that it be included in the newsletter. Deadline for the next issue is July 15. ♦

Typesetting of *Freedom Watch* contributed by Dennis Ritchie

INSIDE CITIZENS PROJECT

Next Citizens Project General Meeting Scheduled. The next Citizens Project General Meeting is set for Sunday, July 11 at the Palmer High School auditorium from 7 to 9 p.m. Everyone is invited. More than 800 people attended our last general meeting, and we have rented a larger auditorium for this meeting. We encourage you to come and hear about Citizens Project's current and future projects, and to express your concerns.

Citizens Project Announces Scholarship. As mentioned in our February newsletter, Citizens Project has established a scholarship for college-bound high school seniors making a significant contribution to tolerance and diversity in our region. Scholarship information is now available at high schools throughout the Pikes Peak region, and we invite all qualified seniors to apply for the 1993 \$500 scholarship. Citizens Project will announce the scholarship choice by August 1st. If you have questions about the scholarship, please call the Citizens Project office. Citizens Project welcomes financial contributions to the scholarship fund from individuals or businesses wishing to encourage our young people to truly "Celebrate Diversity."

Full-Time Staff Person Joins Citizens Project. Citizens Project is pleased to welcome Mike Shaver as our full-time office coordinator and newsletter editor. Mike is a graduate of Colorado College with a background in political science and journalism. Mike is also serving as a Media/Outreach coordinator for Citizens Project. Now that Citizen Project has hired Mike and moved into our downtown offices, we are starting to feel like an established part of the Pikes Peak region. We would like to thank all of you who supported our long and hard journey to reach this point, and we look forward to continuing to contribute to the "marketplace of ideas" in this area.

Citizens Project Co-founders Receive Award. Amy Divine and Douglas Triggs, co-founders of Citizens Project, were recently honored by Colorado educators for "service on behalf of public education in Colorado." The Lion's Advocacy Award recognizes Doug and Amy's commitment to community service in our region.

Citizens Project Online. Citizens Project, through Community News Service (CNS), is now online with Internet, the world's largest computer bulletin board. Internet has over 25 million users and is accessible to anyone with a computer and a modem. To access CNS's Internet service for information about Citizens Project—including our newsletter—just dial 719-520-1700 or 303-758-2656 using your modem. When prompted for a login, type "citproj" and answer "project" when asked for a password. Not only will you get information on what's new with CP, you can contact our staff directly with questions and comments.

We can also be reached through the following bulletin board addresses: the Internet mail address is "citizens@cscns.com," our telenet address is "cscns.com," with the login id "citproj" and password "project;" our FTP address is "cscns.com" in the "citizens" directory; and our Listserv

email address is "listserv@cscns.com." However, the easiest access to Citizens Project is through the CNS enhanced Internet services using the telephone numbers above.

If you plan to be online with Citizens Project and others, you may want to get your own personal Internet account through CNS. Naturally, there's something in it for both you and for Citizens Project: Community News Service will contribute a 75 cent credit to the CP account for each hour of user time logged by CP participants (you have to mention Citizens Project when you sign up for your own Internet account), and you get full Internet access through CNS to other services such as AT&T EasyLink, SprintNet and DECNet with their discussion groups and live teleconferences. If you want more information on establishing a CNS Internet account, call 592-1240 in the Colorado Springs area (800-748-1200 outside Colorado Springs). The people at CNS are a professional group, ready to assist you in staying informed through the world of electronic mail. Give them a call, and when you do, please mention Citizens Project.

Conflict Resolution Seminars. The Colorado Institute for Conflict Resolution and Creative Leadership is offering a seminar for Citizens Project participants entitled "Resolving Conflicts of Values and Beliefs: Learning How to Celebrate Diversity." The workshop will be held Saturday, June 26 in Friendship Hall at Calvary United Methodist Church and runs from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This one-day workshop covers a broad range of issues, including identifying conflict in yourself and others, negotiating and resolving conflicts of values and beliefs, and working with difficult people. The workshop instructors are Barry Weinhold, Ph.D., and Janae Weinhold, Ph.D. Both are co-directors of the Colorado Institute for Conflict Resolution and Creative Leadership, with extensive experience in the field of leadership training. Participants signing up before June 20 pay \$30 each or \$55 per couple. After June 20, the cost is \$45 per person and \$60 per couple. Please make checks payable to Citizens Project. To sign up, complete the application form included in this newsletter.

A separate expanded conflict resolution seminar will be held July 9, 10 and 11, followed by sessions on July 17, 18 and 19. For more information, please call the Colorado Institute 634-5776.

Supporting Citizens Project. Your continued support of Citizens Project is greatly appreciated, and with your generous contributions we've been able to accomplish a great deal. However, more needs to be done. For those who don't know, here are some options available for your financial support:

Sustainers - Citizens Project is always looking for people willing to pledge their support on a regular basis. Sustainers are the key to CP's ability to plan our long-term goals.

Donations - CP welcomes one-time or multiple donations of any amount. Donations can be earmarked for the scholarship
(Continued on Page 11)

INSIDE CITIZENS PROJECT

(Continued from Page 11)

fund, or can be made in someone's name as a memorial or honorarium.

We now have the ability to charge contributions to your Master Card or Visa accounts. With your Visa/Master Card account number, a signature and expiration date we can take your donation and send you a receipt. For more information about contributions to Citizens Project, please contact Shelley Anckner at 520-9899.

Thanks for the Contributions. Your contributions keep Citizens Project going. With your help, we have put out our newsletters, hired our full-time office coordinator, purchased two much-needed computers for the office, and have been able to pay the expenses of having a "regular" office. If we forgot to say so before, let us again say our heartfelt "Thank You!"

CP Youth Group Activities. Plans are currently under way for a summer "getaway." If you think your child might be interested, contact Shelley Anckner at the office, and we will get you on a special mailing list for more information.

Available From Citizens Project. The following materials are still available from Citizens Project. Simply call 520-9899, and we will send them to you at no cost.

■ Our blue and white "Celebrate Diversity!" bumper stickers.

■ The pro and con articles on whether America is a "Christian Nation."

■ Our April 22 "Forum" article in the *Gazette-Telegraph* newspaper about the "spiritual war" philosophy of the religious right and Citizens Project's concern for tolerance. This article is substantially similar to the "Diversity Dilemma" article appearing in our last newsletter.

■ "What's Wrong With The Religious Right" and "Hocus Focus," written by a member of the board of directors of Citizens Project. The "Hocus Focus" article analyzes the philosophy and tactics presented at the November Community Impact Seminar offered by Focus on the Family and Rocky Mountain Family Council here in Colorado Springs. Although

Focus on the Family has promised a rebuttal to this article, Citizens Project has yet to receive it.

Citizens Project also has blue and white "Celebrate Diversity!" buttons for fifty cents each (two for a dollar). Simply send in your money, and we will mail out your button or buttons.

Keeping Right With the World. At a recent Citizens Project meeting, someone asked about sources that would be useful in keeping up with the changing agendas of religious right organizations here in Colorado. Here are some:

■ *Colorado Christian News*, a monthly newspaper available free at Colorado Springs King Soopers stores, or \$25 per year subscription through Mortenson Broadcasting Co, 2150 West 29th Avenue #300, Denver, CO 80211, phone (303) 458-8579. Very good for coverage of the right wing's Colorado agenda, with regular guest columns from a number of local right wing groups.

■ *World* magazine, a slim, mostly weekly, news magazine published by God's World Publications, Box 2330, Asheville, NC 28803, phone 1-800-951-6397 for a \$27.95 per year subscription. A recent issue contained an article entitled "Tightly-wound Springs" that examined the polarization in Colorado Springs, and featured information on Citizens Project and Focus on the Family. Coverage emphasizes national issues of interest to the religious right, but they make an effort toward balance.

■ *Citizen* magazine, Focus on the Family's monthly magazine which illustrates their public policy agenda (never say "political agenda") and makes suggestions on how to take action. Subscriptions are a "suggested annual donation" of \$20, payable to Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO 80995; or you can call 1-800-232-6459 and have your donation placed on your credit card. Another advantage of subscribing to *Citizen*: each issue includes a monthly insert from the Rocky Mountain Family Council, the Denver-based political action arm of the Colorado "family values" movement.

■ *Christian American*, Pat Robertson's national Christian Coalition nine-per-year newspaper. Enclosed with each newspaper is the Colorado Christian Coalition's Colorado supplement. All this for \$24 per year to *Christian American*, Box 1990,

Chesapeake, VA 23327, or phone 1-800-325-4746 to subscribe. The national newsletter is garish and strident, and the local supplement is anemic, but together they are worth the cost. ♦

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